

Ivanoil: Cristalixer's Corruption

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Ivanoil: Cristalixer's Corruption

by [MiaQc](#)

Summary

Haley, an orphan, is saved by the mysterious Ivanoil, a being who seems to be both male and female. Hir is a Cristalixer and the strange Corruption is still present.

- A translation of [Ivanoil: La Corruption d'um Cristalixer](#) by [MiaQc](#)

Stranger

Methaise's world. In the small town of Dautagne there is an orphanage. Run by the charming Miss Edna, whose red hair is the talk of the town, the institution takes in children who have lost their families.

Haley is a special case. This toddler was left at their door by a mysterious man who had asked Miss Edna to "protect" him. The man never revealed if he was the child's father. Since he was only 3 years old, Haley doesn't remember his face. Yet he always wondered if this man was his father and, if so, why did he leave him here? Now 10 years old, Haley is surprisingly mature for his age. He has become a role model for orphans younger than him, but he rebuffs adults who would like to adopt him. Edna has already questioned him about this.

"Haley? Don't you want to be part of a family?"

Haley scratches her head slightly, a sign of important thinking. His blue-gray eyes seem lost in the distance of his thoughts.

"You are my family, Miss Edna."

"That's nice, but—"

"I have to wait for him."

"Your... your... father...? The man who—"

"No. Not him."

Haley's voice has become cold and distant. Edna hates it when he talks like that. It makes her feel like she has a mysterious creature in front of her rather than a creamy-blond child. It doesn't help that he is very tall for a 10-year-old.

"Someone else. Someone I... need to help."

Then, noticing that he had made Edna uncomfortable, he excused himself and went back to playing with the other children. Haley always wore the clothes provided by the orphanage. Often sweaters or t-shirts, as well as second-hand pants. He never complained about it, even when he had to wear a pink sweater for several months.

Anyway, one autumn night, Haley has a strange dream. He is on an island, in a small village. In front of him are two children. A redheaded boy with ivory skin. A girl with black hair and brown skin. The boy has green eyes, the girl has brown eyes. They are about 9 years old.

"I don't understand." Said the boy.

"Our god doesn't want you or your family." Replies the girl.

"Why? We are all Oscatima's inhabitants!"

"Yes, but He prefers those with dark skin, like me."

"Why?"

"Because black is His favorite color."

"It's not true! The Great Carriers never said that He—"

"Have you ever seen the paintings, the statues representing Him? All of them are in black."

The boy doesn't answer the girl and she continues to talk.

"You must realize that. There are two types of people on this island: those He favors and those He ignores."

"This is stupid! We pray to Him every day! How does our skin color decide—"

Suddenly, a loud male voice is heard.

"ETOILE! Where are you?"

The girl, Etoile, tells the boy that it's her father.

"I have to leave. He must not see us together."

"But WHY? I don't understand anything!"

Etoile doesn't answer the boy.

"Your name is... E... Etoi... ley?"

"No, Etoile."

"Your dad pronounces it like 'Etoiley'. That's funny. I'm Ivan. Shall

we... shall we meet again?"

A thick fog envelops Haley and he wakes up sweating in the middle of the night. He hears Tyco ask him if everything is okay.

Tyco is a teenager with brown hair and green eyes. Because of his strange interest in the occult, no one wants to adopt him, and he is approaching his 17th birthday.

"Yes, I... I had a strange dream."

"Um... very interesting. Tell me about it tomorrow at lunch, okay?"

"Okay."

Haley tries to go back to sleep and doesn't succeed until just before lunch time at 7:00. When that time comes, everyone goes to the big table for lunch. Haley, still falling asleep, reluctantly goes to the table after getting dressed in his worn, gray clothes. At the big table, Tyco sits next to him. He asks him about his dream.

"Well, I was—"

Haley yawns.

"Sorry. I'm still sleepy. I was on an island, in a small village."

"What was it called?"

"Oscatima."

Haley has always had an excellent memory, but he finds it troubling. The way he can remember names of places, people, concepts he's never heard of.

"The island or the village?"

"I don't know. Both?"

"That's fascinating, what happened next?"

"There were two children. A boy and a girl. The girl was telling him about a god—"

Suddenly, there was a shout from the kitchen.

"What the...?" Tyco asks.

Edna, wanting to reassure everyone, goes to see what's going on and Haley feels a throb in his chest. He abruptly gets up from his chair.

"NO! Miss Edna is in danger!"

When he's not having strange dreams, Haley is having weird feelings... and often when there's danger.

Haley runs to the kitchen and stumbles upon horror. Marco, the cook, has turned into a monstrous creature. Haley has to rationalize to be able to describe it.

The creature has thick, robust bird's legs, chicken's?, covered with flesh that looks like minced meat. Its torso is that of a woman, but its flesh is branded. Its arms are skeletal. Its head, the only thing that seems relatively normal, has the face of a man who has gone into a murderous rage. Haley also notices that the creature has red stone's shards in several places on its body.

"M...Ma...Mar...Marco! MARCO!!!"

The creature, hearing Edna scream, wants to attack her, but Haley gets its attention.

"HEY! Over here!"

The creature wants to pounce on him, but Haley dodges it. As it wants to bait him, Haley is about to flee when a stranger interrupts in the kitchen. Tyco is standing behind them.

"WOOOOOOOW!" Tyco exclaims, all impressed. "That creature is—"

"Go!" said the stranger. "Don't just stand there!"

"A-All right! Miss Edna, come on!"

Edna and Tyco leave the kitchen. Haley is now alone with the creature and this stranger. A very special person. When Haley looks at them, he feels as if he is seeing a man as much as a woman.

He, she?, has short brown hair with red highlights. Their skin is mixed, the perfect complexion between brown and ivory. Their eyes are of a very strange color. A pale yellow. He, she?, wears a long black

coat, a white vest grayed by wear, gray pants and brown shoes. A strange color combination, according to Haley, and their clothes have tears. He, she?, also carries a bag slung over their side. Probably to carry travel supplies. Haley also sees a slight aura around them. An aura of danger. The stranger puts himself in front of Haley.

"Stay well behind me."

"I-I-I get it."

Hir voice is also strange. Male or female? Haley can't tell, but it's powerful. The creature makes a strange sound, a cross between a rooster's crow and a man's grunt.

"Here we go. RUBEMIL DAI LAÏZIZ!"

Under Haley's surprised look, red crystal fragments come out of the stranger's flesh. They cover part of hir arms and legs. The fragments glow and a large fireball appears. The fireball will hit the creature, causing severe burns, but it is still alive.

"You want more, don't you?" Says the stranger, as the red crystal fragments enter hir skin, leaving no wound behind. "As you wish. PERIDA DAI LAÏZIZ!"

This time, green crystal fragments burst from the stranger's skin. They glow and the creature is trapped in a vortex of cutting air. It is cut into bloody pieces and Haley, frightened, screams.

"Calm down, calm down!" Said the stranger. "It's finished, this thing is dead."

Still, Haley continues to scream for quite a while.

When he manages to calm down, he is stunned by surprise. Who is this person and where does hir get those magical powers? The green crystal fragments enter the stranger's flesh. Haley notices that hir aura seems to have thickened and is darker. Hir eyes have also changed color to a dark orange.

"Uh... thank you... for defeating... that... thing. Who... who are you?"

"I am Ivanoil, a Cristalixer." Said the stranger in a neutral tone.

"Okay, Ivanoil. You said you were a... a... uhhh..."

"A Cristalixer. You must have noticed. I'm not a man or a woman, but both. I'll make it easy for you. You can choose a gender and talk to me in the masculine or feminine, just like everyone else."

"Uh... but what if I want to talk... in a gender-neutral way?"

"In that case, you use 'them' or 'hir'."

"I... I... see."

Haley finds it a bit confusing, but interesting. He feels like he's learning the words to a new language.

"And what is a Cristalixer?"

"It's—"

He, she... no, hir gets interrupted by Edna who has returned to the kitchen. Edna is happy to see that Haley is still alive, disgusted to see the kitchen all bloody, and she invites Ivanoil to stay for the rest of the day. They refuses.

"I'm just passing through. I have to get to Saulary quickly."

"I see." Edna says.

"Saulary?" Haley asks Ivanoil.

"A small village, east of here. A good five days' walk. Strange things are happening there. I can feel it."

Haley feels a strange sensation in his chest. He doesn't want to go, to leave the orphanage, and yet he wants to travel with Ivanoil. He wants to be by hir side, to protect hir... but from what?

"Well, uh, goodbye."

"WAIT!!!"

"You don't have to yell, I haven't left yet."

"Sorry. I... I want to go with you!"

"WHAT?!" Edna said, not expecting this.

"I don't know why yet... but you are the person I've been waiting for all these years!"

"I don't—"

"I was abandoned here by a man for my 'protection'. I don't know if he's my father. I always wondered why. What was I supposed to be protected from?"

Ivanoil says nothing. Hir just listens to Haley.

"Then there are these strange dreams... these sensations... I have... I feel like I have... some kind of power... and—"

"My Corruption. Do you see it?"

"Huh? What?"

"My eyes' changing color. My aura. Do you see it?"

"Yes, I—"

"This is incredible. Only a Cristalixer can see the Corruption. This man... was he...? Normally, Cristalixer powers are inherited from father to son."

"'Normally'?"

"I am an exception to the rule. I became a Cristalixer... in a different way."

"So that means this man is...!"

"Not necessarily. Yes, your father was a Cristalixer, but he may not have left you here. In fact, the most likely theory is that he died and a trusted friend brought you here for protection."

Haley is put off by the idea that his father is dead, but at the same time, he has never wondered what happened to his mother. Maybe she's dead. Then, if his father is still in this world, why hasn't he come for him? Why, with the powers he possesses, would he be unable to protect his son?

"Forgive me. I don't want to take away your hope, but... Cristalixer are very rare. Most are weak. They don't live long. The Corruption—"

"Haley, you—" Edna begins to say before he intervenes.

"Whatever! I still want to go with you. If my parents are alive, I'll find them. If not... too bad. At least I would have explored the world."

"HALEY! You can't be serious. You are so young—"

"Miss Edna, I know VERY WELL what I am doing! Ivanoil, please..."

"He has the potential to be a Cristalixer." Says Ivanoil. "They... Evil forces will try to harm him. It's best if he travels with me."

"I don't understand... all of it." Edna finally said. "But if this is what he really wants—"

Haley rushes into her arms, thanking her, and Tyco rears his head again.

"Did I hear the word 'Cristalixer' right? Haley is going to travel with a Cristalixer? THAT'S SOOOOOO COOL!!!"

"Tyco... wait, do you know what a Cristalixer is?"

"Yeah. It was an old guy who had told me a legend about them."

"Why didn't you ever tell me about this before!?!"

"Well, you NEVER asked me!"

Haley sighs. He still doesn't know what it is, exactly. After stocking up on supplies and saying goodbye to the other orphans, Haley leaves the orphanage with Ivanoil. Their destination: Saulary.

Forest

It has been two days since Haley and Ivanoil headed to Saulary. Ivanoil's eyes are pale yellow again and hir aura is light. Before they reach the village, they must pass through a forest.

"What's its name?" Haley asks Ivanoil.

"Saulary forest. Not a very original name. What do you think?"

"It's nice, nothing more."

Ivanoil continues to walk in silence. Although Haley has been traveling with hir for a good 48 hours, he hasn't asked them anything. Who hir is, where hir's from, what a Cristalixer is, the Corruption. He needs to ask them right now!

"Ivano—"

"Hide, quickly!"

"Huh? Wh—?"

"HURRY UP!"

Haley runs to hide between two trees and he hears inhuman sounds. Is Ivanoil in a fight? Haley stays hidden. The sounds get louder and louder and then suddenly stop. He waits a little longer and Ivanoil comes to get him.

"Ivanoil! What happened? Your aura has thickened again!!!"

Hir eyes are orange again.

"A hunter... the Corruption got him... I had to—"

"I don't understand. Had he turned into a monster, like Marco?"

"Yes."

"Because of this... Corruption?"

"Yeah."

"Do you have some too because you're a Cristalixer?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then you risk to—!"

"No. I am always careful, and I purify myself often."

Ivanoil sighs.

"I'm not the best person to explain all this to you. I'm a poor teacher! But to keep you ignorant would be madness. So..."

A Cristalixer is a Cristalix's user. He can also see Corruption. Only males are Cristalixer and the powers are passed from father to son during puberty, except for Ivanoil. There are two ways to use a Cristalix. Either inherit one directly from the previous generation or summon one and defeat it in single combat. The second way is rarely used because the chances of surviving a Cristalix are almost zero. Normally, each Cristalixer has only one Cristalix, but Ivanoil has four.

All Cristalixer have an aura, the thickness of which represents their Corruption levels, and their eyes change color according to these same levels. From pale yellow, to orange, to dark red. If the eyes turn completely black then that's the end.

A Cristalix is not a god, nor a spirit, but a completely alien entity. A crystal being. He, she, hir gender isn't defined, has no notion of good and evil. Hir has control over an element, such as fire, water etc., and hir is content to fulfill the desire of their father and creator, unless hir is "bound" to a Cristalixer. Ivanoil refuses to say the name of this creator, but Haley knows that he knows him.

Corruption is directly related to the Cristalix and Cristalixer. It's the essence of evil, hatred, and madness. A supernatural force that has existed in Methaise since the beginning of time. The Cristalixer's creator wants to cover the world with his darkness, his madness, so he spreads his own Corruption with the help of his 'children'. The Cristalixer, carrying a Cristalix, always have some on them.

"In a sense, we are living on borrowed time. The Corruption is always within us, threatening to eliminate us by driving us into madness and turning us into bloodthirsty monsters, like Marco and the hunter."

"But Marco and the hunter were not Cristalixer!" Exclaims Haley.

"Then why did the Corrup—"

"Corruption can affect anyone. The only difference is that Cristalixer can keep it at bay... for a while."

"My... father... do you really think he—?"

He wants to say "really dead", but Ivanoil interrupts him.

"Don't think about it. You'll be eating your heart out for nothing. I haven't run into any other Cristalixer in my many travels, but the ones I've heard about never made it into their 30s."

"And...?"

"I have my 29th birthday and I wonder if I'm going to be an exception for that."

Haley falls silent. Ivanoil would have less than a year to live?

"That's awful!"

"Come on, we need to get back on the road."

They resume crossing the forest.

Before nightfall, Ivanoil prepares a campfire.

"Haley, can you stand guard? I need to purify myself to get rid of my accumulated Corruption."

"Sure, but—"

Ivanoil immediately falls asleep, under Haley's surprised glance. Hir immediately finds himself surrounded by a thick reddish fog. Their Cristalix appear and surround them. Perida to the north, Rubemil to the south, Citrinell to the east, Lazulore to the west.

"For Onyxzyrimon's love, bring the door to my soul!"

To make such a request to the Cristalix, mentioning His Name rather than the Cristalixer's bound, would be suicidal for anyone else, but not for Ivanoil. After all, hir is what hir is only because of Him. Without Him, Ivan and Etoile would be...

Hir Cristalix glitter with a blinding light and disappear, leaving a large black door covered with silver chains. Ivanoil goes to the door. Hir destroys the chains by touching them, opens the door, walks through it and closes it behind them. Then the door disappears.

Ivanoil is now in an abandoned house. There is blood everywhere and the fog is still present. On the walls, hir victories against the Corruption's victims are represented as hunting trophies. He looks at the one of "MARCO" before going up the stairs to two rooms. One has the name "IVAN", the other "ETOILE". Ivanoil goes to the room "IVAN".

Hir finds a little boy lying in his bed. The child is surrounded by a black aura and his body is deformed.

"I am here, O my Corruption."

Hir bows a little and the child begins to laugh.

"It's been a long time, Cristalixer!"

"No. I kicked your ass two days ago. Have you forgotten already?"

"INSOLENT INSECT! YOU ARE UNWORTHY OF BEING HIR COMPANION!"

"I NEVER WANTED to be hir—"

"SILENCE!!!"

The Corruption-Child gets up and launches a full-blown attack on hir. Ivanoil resists the attack, despite hir soaring Corruption. Hir eyes are now dark red.

"HA! In the state you're in, you'll never—"

"SHUT THE FUCK UP!"

Hir voice is hoarse and beastly. Hir has almost no time left, hir must finish it now. Ivanoil has defeated the Corruption-Child in the form of IVAN with a single attack. He shouts to them that he will return before disappearing.

Hir only has to deal with ETOILE, but hir Corruption is almost at its limit. They has only one chance. They violently opens the door of the room "ETOILE" and hir sees the other child-Corruption.

"Hello, O Cristalixer."

Ivanoil is going to stab her in the heart with a blade created from one of hir Cristalix's crystals. The other Corruption-Child politely tells them that she will return before disappearing. Ivanoil feels lightheaded. Much of hir Corruption leaves them and the house looks less scary. The blood is gone. The fog is barely visible. Hir eyes turn pale yellow again. Hir is safe... for now. Hir leaves the house and wakes up.

"Ivanoil!!!"

"It's okay, it's okay, my Corruption is going down."

"I noticed that! Your aura has decreased, but... I was worried!"

"Sorry. You can sleep now."

"...Okay."

Haley goes to bed and has another strange dream. He is in front of a mysterious door and he can't open it. As soon as the sun rises, Ivanoil wakes him up and they continue their journey to Saulary. As they leave the forest, Haley wants to talk to hir about his dream, but he feels that Ivanoil is barely listening. He finds it strange, but he doesn't insist.

Saulary

After three more days of travel, Haley and Ivanoil arrive in Saulary but the village is in ruins.

"No..." Ivanoil says softly.

"What happened?" Haley asks.

The boy feels the air is unnaturally heavy.

"There may be survivors. Come on Haley!"

They search through the rubble and discover a young woman with silver hair. She seems to be the only survivor.

"Are you hurt?" Ivanoil asks the woman.

"AHHHH! Your... soul... is surrounded... by red... danger, danger, danger, danger!"

"Calm down. Everything is under control!"

"Danger, danger, danger, danger, danger, danger!"

"Try to talk to her." Ivanoil says to Haley, "I'll keep an eye on the area... there's Corruption in the air."

Ivanoil walks away and Haley addresses the woman.

"My name is Haley."

"Ha...Haley... you too..."

"What?"

"Your soul... it absorbs some..."

"Corruption?"

"Is that what you call... this evil? Yes... a little bit... You have to be careful. Your soul—"

"What's your name?"

The woman seems to hesitate and then tells Haley that her name is

Alishia. She's one of the few with the gift of sensing other people souls. She can see "red" (Corruption) on Ivanoil's soul. Alishia can also connect with souls.

"This is amazing." Says Haley.

He then asks Alishia if she knows what happened to the village.

"Yes. A small group of people, strangers to Saulary, were performing an evil ritual for their 'god'. A crystal god, an all-black god. Some villagers tried to stop them. It ended in a bloodbath, but the ritual was mostly completed. The earth began to shake. Houses collapsed. The air became heavy. Survivors... turned into... IT WAS HORRIBLE! Those creatures... my mind can't describe them."

"And then?"

"The creatures have fled, having devoured other villagers. They are heading..."

Alishia concentrates intensely. Haley feels as if her soul is trying to connect with something. Suddenly, she lets out a cry of pain.

"Alishia!"

"AH! Your friend... has a soul in pain. This ever-present Corruption. Anyway, the creatures... They're heading south, toward the sea, toward Sept-Searai port city. If you leave now, you can catch them before they go on a rampage. AH AH AH AH AH HHHH!!!"

"Your pain is getting worse?"

"It's him... her? He's in the middle of a fight and her Corruption is increasing."

"Oh oh! Come quickly!"

Alishia follows Haley and they come across Ivanoil in the middle of a fight with a half-woman, half-bird creature. A long worm dangles from between her legs.

"What is that?" Asks Haley. "That thing between her—"

"YUCK! That looks like a dick!" Exclaims Alishia.

"A what?"

"N-N-Nothing!"

Ivanoil's body is bleeding profusely and the crystal fragments covering much of his flesh glow intensely. His eyes are bright red.

"Red eyes are bad! This is REALLY bad!" Haley exclaims in panic.

"I got this."

Ivanoil launches a powerful attack on the creature. This kills it and, as Alishia maintains his Corruption by focusing on his soul, Ivanoil can purify himself immediately. When he wakes up, he thanks Alishia.

"This... This... is... noth... AHFFF!"

"That sounds very painful." Said Haley.

"I... I better... leave... to live somewhere else. Don't you forget, Haley? To Sept-Searai!"

Alishia leaves for another village. Ivanoil asks Haley only one question.

"Why did she mention Sept-Searai?"

"Because there are creatures, other people who have succumbed to the Corruption, who are heading for Sept-Searai."

"We must catch up with them. Let's go!"

Without wasting any time, they set off.

"I have to defeat them. This is my role, my reason for existing. As a Cristalixer, I must—"

After several days of walking, Ivanoil and Haley catch up to the creatures, but there are too many for one Cristalixer.

"No... I'm never going to be able to—"

"You can do it!" Haley insists.

He then summons Perida's power to create a giant tornado, trapping all the creatures in it. Then he can take the time to destroy them.

"Whew! That was something." Says Haley.

"Not for you. You didn't do anything!" Ivanoil replies.

"Now where do we go?"

"I travel wherever I please, following the Corruption's footsteps, destroying every vile creature... but we're near Sept-Searai so let's go there."

Thus Ivanoil and Haley go to Sept-Searai. When they arrive in the city, they go to the inn to spend a good night's sleep in comfortable beds.

Dream

While Ivanoil sleeps lightly, as he is always on guard with his Corruption always on the lookout, Haley is in another strange dream. A revealing dream. He is back on the island and he sees Etoile surprising Ivan.

"Idiot. What are you doing here?"

They are both in an underground and Ivan spies a group of people wearing black robes. Cult members?

"I want to see what they're up to." Ivan says to Etoile.

"The rituals for our god are not for you."

"Enough! My family... I pray to Him every day, I have the right to know—"

"You don't understand. When He comes into this world, you—"

"When He comes into this world"? What are you talking about?"

"We, His Carriers, have been trying for generations to bring him to our world, to Methaise, so that he can do His Will."

"His Will? What does He want from us?"

"Eternal darkness, madness... pure Corruption, EVERYWHERE!"

"NO! If this happens, we will all die!!!"

"No, you fool. Only you, the Weak Pale Carriers, will perish. We, the Dark Chosen Carriers, will live on in a new form! My daddy told me so."

"Your daddy is talking rubbish! Skin color has nothing to do with Our Devotion... and if Onyxzyrimon only wants to destroy us all, I... I'll stop him!"

"You really are a fool. He is a GOD. He can't be stopped and how dare you speak his name?!"

"I'll stop him, Etoile! I... I thought we were... friends."

Etoile laugh.

"Me, the friend of a Weak Carrier? In your dreams! I only started talking to you and hanging out with you as a courtesy. I also wanted to open your eyes to your REAL place in our cult, but since you want to thwart our plans, I'll have to eliminate you!"

Etoile plans to attack Ivan (with a knife? Haley doesn't have time to see well), but the boy is faster. He tackles her to the ground.

"I'm not going to die here without a fight!"

To express his rage, he screams a curse at Onyxzyrimon and a thick fog spreads through the tunnels. A strange light appears in front of the cultists' group. Ivan hears a Great Carrier shout that their rituals have finally worked, that all the sacrifices they have made for Corruption have paid off and that Onyxzyrimon will manifest in their world.

"YESSSSSSSSSSSS!" Etoile shouts.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!" Ivan yells.

He leaves Etoile and, without thinking, runs towards the light. The cultists try to catch him, but Ivan dodges them all. He sees a silhouette forming in the light. The silhouette of something inhuman. Not a god, but a completely alien entity. He is about to put his hand into the light when Etoile catches him and pushes him away.

"I'm not going to let you ruin everything!"

"Then you'll REALLY have to do me in!"

The two children fight violently, to the point of blood, and no one tries to stop them. The light explodes into brilliant flashes and Onyxzyrimon begins to take physical form. When Ivan and Etoile meet his many eyes, the unexpected happens. A large explosion occurs, the cultists are almost all fried, Onyxzyrimon loses his corporeal appearance and he returns to where he came from.

In Ivan and Etoile's place is an adult, his body lying on the ground. He is 27, with short brown hair with red highlights, mixed skin, and Haley knows him. He travels with them. *Ivanoil*... Ivanoil slowly rises to his feet and hears a surviving cultist whispering disturbing things.

"Onyxzyrimon... oh Onyxzyrimon... your Companion is here... your Companion is here... his is a beautiful Cristalixer... but they are our

cursed enemies... Onyxzyrimon... your Companion... your precious compa—"

The cultist agonizes and Ivanoil lets out a scream as crystals fragments pierce his flesh. Green, red, yellow and blue fragments. His Cristalix.

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH! I... am... a... Cris...ta...li...xer... I must... fight... Corruption... Cor...rup...tion... tion... tion... tion... Onyx...zyrimon..."

Haley wakes up with a start. It is still dark at Sept-Searai. He can't get back to sleep. He needs to talk to Ivanoil.

Haley goes to see them in his room at the inn.

"Ivanoil?"

"Hmmm..."

"I need to talk to you. It's urgent."

Ivanoil opens his eyes. They are dark yellow.

"I know about Ivan and Etoile! I saw your birth in a dream!"

Ivanoil's gaze turns cold and his eyes turn pale orange.

"You weren't supposed to know... ah, whatever. Yes, I was born during an attempt to summon Him. I left Ocatima island and have been fighting Corruption and those otherworldly creatures ever since."

"You mean you ran away, like a coward."

Why did Haley say such words? He doesn't know himself, but he feels a great anger growing inside him.

"Don't talk nonsense! I had no reason to stay—"

"You could have stopped him! Onyxzy—"

Ivanoil yells at him not to say his name and his eyes turn dark orange.

"He cannot be stopped! He is eternal, like his children, the Cristalix! As long as people will try to invoke—"

"Then you could have stopped his cult, his sect! His... 'Carriers'?"

"Even if I could have blown up Oscatima island and killed all its inhabitants, others would have taken their place! There will always be fools who want a taste of evil power. Corruption knows how to attract vulnerable souls."

"So you're going to spend the time you have left to live... doing nothing at all?"

That's bullshit. Haley isn't going to let hir Companion die in vain.

"Not at all! I'm fighting, since I was born, and I'm going to keep fighting for the rest of my life!"

Haley can't take it anymore. His anger explodes.

"So you're really a coward!!! If I was a Cristalixer, I would have killed Onyx... well, I would have tried, like my dad! I'm sure he died a hero trying to stop him!"

After all, if his father is really dead, not just anything can defeat a Cristalixer in battle.

"YOUUU!!!"

Ivanoil's eyes turn pale red.

"You're just a kid, you don't know anything about Cristalixer! Our existence is a curse! I am an abomination, Onyxzyrimon's Companion! Your father—"

"DON'T BRING MY FAMILY INTO THIS, YOU ASSHOLE! KICK YOUR OWN ASS AND GO DO YOUR REAL DUTY! STOP HIM ONCE AND FOR ALL! DESTROY ONYXZYRIMON!!!!"

Ivanoil's eyes turn dark red and, despite his burning rage, Haley realizes he has gone too far. He must do something or Ivanoil's Corruption will get them. Haley doesn't know what to say or do. Ivanoil puts hir face between hir two hands. Hir looks in great pain.

"I... i aM..."

Hir voice is hoarse and beastly.

"I have no other choice. Forget about me, Haley, and go back to the orphanage."

Without Haley being able to stop them, Ivanoil calls all his Cristalix, wraps his body in a crystal prison and they fall asleep. Haley, in despair, calls out his name.

"Hey!"

Haley turns around and sees a young blonde woman dressed in black. She has a small purse.

"You... are you a Carrier?"

"Yes, I am Chloe. Weak Carrier of Onyxzy—"

"I'm not going to let you kill--!"

"Killing... his Companion? But what madness! He will honor me at His Arrival by seeing them!"

"At His Arrival... you all will try to summon him again!"

"Of course. On the next dead moon and, this time, we'll make it."

"The dead moon is tomorrow night."

"Yes and you..."

Chloe takes a dagger out of her bag.

"I'm afraid your journey will end here. It's a shame, you're so young."

Chloe tries to stab Haley, but he dodges her.

"You dirty brat...!"

"Ivanoil, Ivanoil, HELP ME!"

"His can't hear you, stupid!"

The crystal surrounding Ivanoil lights up and Haley passes out.

When Haley comes to, he sees that Ivanoil and Chloe are missing. Daylight enters the room. He is alone. *No. Ivanoil... What should I do now?* Although Ivanoil has asked him to, Haley doesn't want to return to the orphanage. He must save his from the cult before Onyxzyrimon is summoned. But how will he get to Oscatima island? He doesn't even

know where it is.

Suddenly, Haley screams as a blue crystal fragment shoots out of his right arm. *What is...?* Other fragments spout out. Haley falls to the ground under the weight of the pain. Suddenly, his mind seems to be free of all worries. He concentrates on a single fact. *La...lazu...lore...* Lazulore is in him. Lazulore, one of Ivanoil's Cristalix. Hir gave it to him as a... as a legacy. As his father would have done in normal circumstances. *I am... a Cristalixer now.* He feels his soul's Corruption. It is weak, but it is there. As Alishia had told him, his soul is absorbing it. Haley's eyes are no longer blue gray, but pale yellow. *I must... must... stop... the Corruption...* He makes the crystal fragments go back into his flesh. *And save Ivanoil!*

Without wasting time, he leaves the inn and goes to the dock. He knows where Oscatima is, because Lazulore knows. It is a water Cristalix. Before diving into the sea, he invokes its powers and turns into a child covered with blue crystals.

Sacrifice

Haley, transformed, dives into the water and swims to the island. Thanks to Lazulore, he can breathe underwater. Since Oscatima is far away, Haley doesn't get there until nightfall. He has little time to find Ivanoil and stop the cult before Onyxzyrimon is summoned.

Fortunately for him, the islanders ignore him completely. Because he is a child, a stranger? Because they don't consider him a threat? A big mistake. His eyes are now dark yellow... Corruption is still growing.

Listening to a couple talk, Haley learns that the summoning ritual will take place in the underground tunnels, the same place where Ivanoil was born. After hiding the Lazulore crystal fragments, he sets out to go. On the way, he meets Chloe.

"H-H-How did you...?"

Haley just looks at her. He calls Lazulore and Chloe is trapped in a water bubble. She drowns, silently, and Haley sees her wet body hit the ground without flinching. Something changes in him. His emotions. They seem distant and useless. What's the point of feeling pity for his enemies, for the Corruption Carriers?

Haley arrives at the underground tunnels and a man addresses him.

"Hey, you! Who are you?"

Haley doesn't answer him.

"That's strange, you remind me of my daughter."

"Your daughter?"

Haley's voice is cold and distant. This man is wasting his time.

"Yes. Etoile, she—"

"So you're her father? Shame on you. Your daughter is a killer."

"Liar!"

"She tried to kill Ivan. She is a monster."

"YOU LITTLE BRAT, I—!"

The man is silent when he sees blue crystals fragments appearing on Haley's arms.

"You... are you... like him?"

"Like Ivano—?"

"No, like Beckett, the last one who tried to stop us several years ago!"

"Beckett..."

Could it be Haley's father?

"He gave us a hard time, that bastard, but we got him good!"

"Is he dead?"

"What do you think?"

Haley knows it. His father is no longer of this world. He will never have known him.

"...and did he have a wife? Any children?"

"Not that I know of. Anyway, the Cristalixer only reproduce to cause us trouble! If they didn't exist, we—"

Haley has heard enough.

"I've wasted enough time on you. LAZULORE!"

Etoile's father is killed, his head compressed by solidified water, and Haley's eyes turn orange. He continues to move forward and finds Ivanoil. His body is still trapped in the crystal and cultists surround them. Haley senses that they have begun the ritual to call Onyxzyrimon. *O Onyxzyrimon... you will not come tonight.*

Haley unleashes Lazulore's power and he slaughters everyone. Then he goes to put his hands on the crystal and he feels his emotions coming back. Joy, sadness.

"Ivanoil? It's me, Haley..."

The boy has no answer. Only silence. He continues to talk to Ivanoil.

"I... I feel I have changed... I am a Cristalixer and... I understand your words now. The Corruption... will always exist and... and

Onyxzyrimon cannot be defeated, only repelled. I was... SO naive!"

Still a long silence.

"At the orphanage, I was always waiting for someone. I wanted to be by their side, to protect them from something with my 'powers'. Now I understand everything. As a Cristalixer's son, I must fight Corruption, protect the world from Her. It's engraved in my soul, but you're an exceptional Cristalixer, created thanks to Onyxzyrimon. A carrier of far more Cristalix and Corruption than a normal being. A person who must be protected at any cost. In your name, I am ready to do anything, even die, so LET ME PURIFY YOU!"

The crystal enclosing Ivanoil breaks and Haley finds himself in front of a mysterious door. The same as in his dream. It opens and he finds himself in an abandoned house. There is blood everywhere and a thick fog is still present. Haley notices hunting trophies on the walls. One of them has the name MARCO on it. *Marco... I will miss your cooking.*

He walks up the stairs to the second floor. Haley is standing in front of two rooms. One has the name "IVAN", the other "ETOILE". Haley is about to open one of the two doors when the silhouette of two children, merged and deformed, appears.

"It's too late, rookie Cristalixer."

"Who—?"

"We are IVAN and ETOILE."

"No, I don't believe you! You must be—"

"Right. We are Ivanoil's Corruption. You can't defeat us. It's too late."

"We'll see about that!"

Haley concentrates all of Lazulore's offensive power and he knocks out the Corruption with one attack.

"N...No... how...?"

"Now, LEAVE HIR ALONE!"

"HA HA HA HA HA HA HA! Okay, at least for now!"

The two children's silhouette begin to disappear.

"But know that a sacrifice must be made for Onyxzyrimon to remain in his kingdom."

The house suddenly looks less scary. The blood has disappeared. The fog is barely visible. Haley's eyes turn pale red and he finds himself back in the underground tunnels.

Ivanoil is before him, wide awake and alive. Hir eyes are yellow.

"IVANOIL!"

"Haley, you... you did it... you cleansed me."

"I know. It's my turn to purify myself."

Haley falls unconscious and he finds himself in front of the Dautagne orphanage's ruins. He knows they aren't real, but it makes him sad. He explores them and finds the door to a room. The name "HALEY" is written on it. His Corruption is waiting for him inside. What will it look like? Haley is about to open the door when a distorted figure appears. It has a lot of eyes.

"You already know who I am, so let's not waste time."

"...Yes. I'm going to kick your butt!"

One fight later...

"AH! I defeated you so GET OUT OF HERE!"

The figure disappears, laughing. Haley knows she'll be back. She will always come back.

He regains consciousness in the underground tunnels. His eyes are yellow again and he sees a worried Ivanoil. A light has appeared in front of them. The same light that Ivan and Etoile had seen before Onyxzyrimon arrived.

"B-B-But... I slaughtered all the cultists in the place!" Says Haley. "The ritual wasn't completed! How can he...?"

"My presence, my Corruption's release, the accumulation of yours, your purification..." Ivanoil explains, "that was enough to call him to our world."

"NOOOOOO!"

The old words from Ivanoil's Corruption give Haley the whiplash effect, "A sacrifice must be made."

"Don't worry. I'll repel it. I... I'm not a coward. I'm going to do my REAL duty."

"Ivanoil..."

Will Haley really let Ivanoil sacrifice himself and die? He remembers their conversations in the forest leading to Saulary.

"I haven't run into any other Cristalixer in my many travels, but the ones I've heard about never made it into their 30s."

"And...?"

"I have my 29th birthday and I wonder if I'll be an exception for that."

For that. For that. For that.

"In your name, I am ready to do anything, even die."

For that. For that. **F...o...r... t...h...a...t...**

"NO! Ivanoil, you mustn't sacrifice yourself!"

"But—"

"That's for me to do. You can have Lazulore back when I'm done with him."

This is his last moment. Haley smiles at Ivanoil and he heads into the light. He lets out a scream and his body disintegrates. The light disappears and Onyxzyrimon is repelled. Methaise's world is safe. Ivanoil is alone again. Hir retrieves Lazulore with a "link" and, without dwelling too much on what has just happened, hir exits the tunnels.

Before hir can leave the island, hir has to face other cultists who are eager for revenge, and during the fights, hir mourns Haley in silence. Hir's never cared about anyone before, and now... *For you, Haley, I'm going to live on, fighting the Corruption. Onyxz... he just has to keep quiet.* Although hir feels that he's happy. Onyxzyrimon has been repelled, yes, but his Companion still lives. He looks forward to accessing his world to touch them in an intimate way. Ironically, Ivanoil's 30th birthday is the next day.

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